

Message Text

SECRET

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ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/IRN:CWNAAS:RR
APPROVED BY NEA:ALATHERTON, JR.
NEA:SSOBER
S/S:RPERITO

-----080230Z 065085 /75

P 080119Z MAR 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 050667

EXDIS// FOR CHARGE FROM ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, XF, US, IR

SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S MIDDLE EAST VISIT

1. AS WE MOVE AHEAD THIS SPRING ON OUR MIDDLE EAST
NEGOTIATIONS WE SHALL WANT, AS PREVIOUSLY, TO KEEP THE
SHAH GENERALLY INFORMED. INASMUCH AS WE HAVE NOT YET
ESTABLISHED HIGH LEVEL PERSONAL CONTACT WITH HIM, WE
BELIEVE IN THIS INSTANCE THAT IT WOULD BE MOST APPROPRIATE
FOR YOU ORALLY TO BRIEF FONMIN KHALATBARY, DRAWING UPON
FOLLOWING TALKING POINTS:

--THE SECRETARY'S TRIP TO THE MIDDLE EAST ACHIEVED THE
LIMITED BUT IMPORTANT OBJECTIVES THAT HAD BEEN SET FOR IT.
WE WANTED VERY MUCH TO MAKE EARLY CONTACT WITH THE LEADERS
OF THE COUNTRIES WHICH ARE KEY TO THE SETTLEMENT PROCESS
AND TO CONVEY TO OUR FRIENDS IN THE MIDDLE EAST THE
SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH WE ARE APPROACHING THE QUESTION OF
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A SETTLEMENT. BEYOND THAT, IT WAS ITSELF THE FIRST STEP IN
THE PROCESS LOOKING TOWARD THE RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS
THIS YEAR. AS A RESULT OF THE TRIP, THE SECRETARY REACHED
A NUMBER OF TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS.

--IT EMERGED FROM THE MANY TALKS IN MIDDLE EAST CAPITALS
THAT, WHILE ARAB AND ISRAELI CONCEPTS OF PEACE REMAIN

QUITE FAR APART, THERE IS A CLEAR DETERMINATION TO MAKE A SERIOUS EFFORT TO REACH A SETTLEMENT. THE SECRETARY FOUND IN ALL THE GOVERNMENTS DIRECTLY CONCERNED A GREAT DESIRE TO HAVE THE IMMENSE BURDEN OF THEIR DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENTS ALLEVIATED AND TO DEVOTE THEIR RESOURCES MORE FULLY TO THE NEEDS OF THEIR PEOPLE.

--MORE PARTICULARLY, THERE WAS A CONSENSUS AMONG ALL CONCERNED THAT THEY SHOULD WORK TOWARD RECONVENING THE GENEVA CONFERENCE IN THE SECOND HALF OF 1977. IT WAS RECOGNIZED THAT MUCH GROUNDWORK NEEDS TO BE LAID BEFORE SUCH A CONFERENCE CAN CONVENE WITH ANY CHANCE OF SUCCESS, AND THAT IT IS DESIRABLE FOR THE U.S. TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE PROCESS.

--THE GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED ALSO AGREED THAT, IF THE PROCEDURAL QUESTIONS CAN BE RESOLVED, THEY ARE PREPARED TO GO TO GENEVA TO DISCUSS SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS.

--THERE WAS A COMMON UNDERSTANDING THAT THE PRINCIPAL SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES ARE THE NATURE OF PEACE, THE WITHDRAWAL/TERRITORIAL QUESTIONS, AND A SETTLEMENT OF THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM.

--THE PRINCIPAL PROCEDURAL ISSUE -- THOUGH IT IS CLEARLY AN ISSUE WITH SUBSTANTIVE IMPLICATIONS -- THAT MUST BE RESOLVED BEFORE NEGOTIATIONS CAN BEGIN REMAINS THE QUESTION OF PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE

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NEGOTIATING PROCESS. THE SECRETARY WAS ENCOURAGED, HOWEVER, BY THE SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH THE GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED ARE EXAMINING WAYS TO OVERCOME THIS OBSTACLE AND IN PARTICULAR BY THE EFFORTS UNDER WAY AMONG ARAB GOVERNMENTS TO WORK OUT A COMMON POSITION THAT WILL FACILITATE A SOLUTION.

--THE PRINCIPAL DIFFICULTY IN THIS REGARD IS THE PLO FAILURE TO ACCEPT THE PRINCIPLE SET FORTH IN SC RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 338 THAT A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT MUST AMONG OTHER THINGS RECOGNIZE ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO LIVE IN PEACE WITHIN SECURE AND RECOGNIZED BOUNDARIES FREE FROM THREATS OR ACTS OF FORCE. THIS IS ALSO REFLECTED IN THE PALESTINIAN COVENANT WHICH QUESTIONS THE VERY BASIS OF ISRAEL'S EXISTENCE.

--ON THE NATURE OF PEACE, ISRAEL WANTS NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS AS A NECESSARY INDICATION THAT THE ARABS ARE GENUINELY PREPARED FOR PEACE. THE ARAB GOVERNMENTS, ON

THE OTHER HAND, TEND TO LOOK TOWARD AN END OF
BELLIGERENCY AS CONSTITUTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A STATE
OF PEACE AND AS A SUFFICIENT CONDITION FOR PEACE.

--ISRAEL IS PREPARED TO RETURN SUBSTANTIAL TERRITORY FOR
REAL PEACE, AS IT DEFINES PEACE, BUT IT BELIEVES THAT
TERRITORY IS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN SECURITY. IT THUS
CONTINUES TO REFER TO QUOTE DEFENSIBLE BORDERS UNQUOTE
AS A CRITERION FOR THE RETURN OF TERRITORY. THE ARAB
GOVERNMENTS SAY THERE CAN BE NO COMPROMISE ON THE
PRINCIPLE OF TOTAL WITHDRAWAL TO THE 1967 LINES, ALTHOUGH
JORDAN APPEARS PREPARED FOR "MINOR RECIPROCAL" CHANGES.
THE ARABS ARE PREPARED, HOWEVER, TO DISCUSS A WHOLE RANGE
OF SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS AND GUARANTEES.

--ISRAEL OPPOSES A SEPARATE PALESTINIAN STATE. THE ARAB
GOVERNMENTS SEEM STILL TO BE EVOLVING THEIR VIEWS AND
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THERE WAS SOME TALK OF A LINKAGE WITH JORDAN, THOUGH
WITHOUT PRECISION.

--IN RETROSPECT IT IS CLEAR THAT THE ARABS HAVE MADE A
MAJOR EFFORT TO ESTABLISH A COMMON FRONT AND, WHERE
DIFFERENCES ARE NOT YET RESOLVED, TO AVOID APPEARANCES OF
PUBLIC DISAGREEMENT. THEY STRESS THAT THEIR DECISION TO
MAKE PEACE REFLECTS A FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE. ISRAEL, FOR
ITS PART, LOOKS FOR CONCRETE MANIFESTATION THAT SUCH A
CHANGE HAS OCCURRED.

--THE PRESIDENT WILL BE RECEIVING PRIME MINISTER RABIN
HERE MARCH 7-8 AND WILL BE MEETING WITH SEVERAL ARAB
LEADERS OVER THE FOLLOWING TWO TO THREE MONTHS. WE WILL
MEANWHILE BE KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH ALL OF THEIR
GOVERNMENTS THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS. WE WOULD HOPE
AND EXPECT THAT THE ARAB SIDE WILL CONTINUE TO DEVELOP
ITS POSITIONS, AND WE WILL LOOK FORWARD TO EXCHANGING
VIEWS AS THIS PROCESS GOES ON. ON THE ISRAELI SIDE, THE
ELECTION CAMPAIGN WILL HINDER THE EVOLUTION OF POSITIONS,
BUT WE WILL BE URGING THE ISRAELIS TO GIVE THE MOST
SERIOUS THOUGHT NONETHELESS TO WAYS IN WHICH THEY MIGHT
ALSO MOVE TO NARROW THE GAP ON KEY ISSUES.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: BRIEFING MATERIALS, PEACE PLANS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 08-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE050667
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: CWNAAS:RR
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770078-0789
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770382/aaaactxd.tel
Line Count: 163
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 9226febb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3175597
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SECRETARY'S MIDDLE EAST VISIT
TAGS: PFOR, XF, US, IR
To: TEHRAN
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/9226febb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009